

**Kevin J. Phillips
Mayor of Caliente, Nevada
Lincoln County, Nevada**

**U.S. DOE Hearing
Yucca Mountain Supplemental E.I.S.
and
Nevada Rail Alignment E.I.S.**

**Caliente, Nevada
November 15, 2007**

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL STATEMENT

I am Kevin J. Phillips, serving in my 15th year as mayor of Caliente, Nevada. [Many citizens of Nevada and the nation understand that nuclear energy is an essential component of our country's energy portfolio to provide for our baseload energy requirements while minimizing harmful emissions. Many Nevadans also believe that Nevada can and should play a major role in meeting our nation's electrical energy needs.

Nevada's leadership would like the Congress and the Department of Energy (DOE) to believe that all Nevadans adamantly oppose the development of the Yucca Mountain Repository. This is not true. I personally know that most Nevadans are truly ill-informed as to the facts of this subject, and simply respond negatively to polls asking if they are in favor the "dump". Who wouldn't respond this way when the question is framed in this manner, and in the context of their lack of knowledge regarding the issue?

There is a significant cross-section of the citizens of Nevada who want to help solve the national energy crisis and lead Nevada to become one of the most technologically and scientifically advanced regions in the world. These Nevadans are pragmatic, solution-oriented leaders who, first and foremost, want to ensure that the Yucca Mountain project is constructed in accordance with sound science and operated in a way that safety is always the number one consideration. We agree with the President and with Congress that the science conducted at Yucca Mountain confirms it to be a suitable site for a geologic repository.

Furthermore, we recognize that the same amount of used nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste that is to be shipped to Yucca Mountain has already been shipped nationally and internationally without a single radioactive release that has resulted in harm to the environment or any individual. In fact, immediately upon the commencement of the used nuclear fuel shipments along the Caliente Rail Line, my citizens will experience a decreased amount of risk from hazardous material shipments. As a railroad town with very little emergency response resources, the citizens of Caliente are at risk every day with chlorine cars and other volatile substances. The increased emergency response capability that will accompany the shipments to Yucca Mountain will greatly enhance the everyday safety of my citizens from a risk management perspective.

Congress and the DOE have a tremendous opportunity to make Yucca Mountain one of the most important and successful public works projects in the history of human existence. Washington has been given all the information it needs to make smart decisions that accomplish this goal. Our government needs to create an opportunity for real, meaningful economic diversification, and it needs to start doing real things now rather than later. This project is far from being broken. If the Congress and the DOE are truly committed to ultimate energy independence and energy security, this can be achieved.]

2 [I respectfully suggest the following:

- Change the name of the site at Yucca Mountain to the “National Energy Reserve at Yucca Mountain”. This modification highlights the value of what we truly are dealing with. This name change, coupled with the following additional suggestions, changes the way this project is viewed by the citizens of Nevada.
- Build the railroad from the City of Caliente to the National Energy Reserve at Yucca Mountain. The Record of Decision issued by the DOE refers to this route as the “Caliente Corridor”. After this final EIS has been completed, the DOE needs to issue the Record of Decision on the specific alignment within the Caliente Rail Corridor and the Congress needs to provide the funding to commence construction of the railroad.
- Ship used fuel to the National Energy Reserve. Here the fuel can further cool in a remote protected environment. Litigation pressures are relieved. Enhanced safety is achieved. The fuel is collected in a central location awaiting re-use.
- Change the name of the “Caliente Corridor” to the “Central Nevada Energy Corridor”. Numerous sites along this new rail line are prime locations for placement of new electrical generation power plants of various types. These “energy zones” could be pre-licensed and would provide great incentive for companies to build new electrical generation resources, including nuclear, clean-coal, solar, wind, and geothermal.
- Designate the National Energy Reserve as the location for the nation’s used fuel recycling facilities. Build such facilities as soon as time and technology permits. Do this in conjunction with Nevada’s university system. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act gives Nevada “preference” for such things. It makes total sense. Move the used fuel once. Recycle it. Place the small amount of “waste” left over deep underground in the repository. Move the new fuel assemblies to a nearby generation facility on the Central Nevada Energy Corridor and produce electricity.]

SPECIFIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

I respectfully offer the following suggestions and comments relative to the Yucca Mountain Supplemental E.I.S., and the Rail Alignment E.I.S.:

- 3 • [The transportation of used fuel is not new to the United States. Over the past 30 years more than 2700 shipments of spent nuclear fuel have been completed safely by both government and industry.
 - There is even more experience worldwide - over the last 25 years more than 70,000 metric tons of uranium has been shipped in about 20,000 casks.
 - Building a railroad is over a billion dollar project and represents an opportunity to diversify Nevada's economy. "Shared use" of this railroad is important to Nevada. [I support the selection of the "Caliente Corridor". Construction should begin as soon as possible.] 4
- 5 • [As the shipments will go through or near Caliente we should have the best in class of emergency response training and equipment] and [facilities such as the transportation operations center, rail maintenance center, cask maintenance facilities, and others that would be appropriate.] 6
- 7 • [DOE should choose the old Caliente to Pioche railroad route and not the Eccles option. The Eccles option would put the railroad right through the middle of acreage designated by Lincoln County as a much needed community expansion area. The old railroad route does no such thing and would be less costly to construct.]
- 8 • [The plans indicate that DOE will build a rail yard proximate to Caliente in one of two identified locations. I recommend choosing the "Cove" option rather than the "Upland" option. The "Upland" yard would displace an active farm and several dwellings. The "Cove" yard does no such thing. The "Cove" yard would be more functional for the operations as it is next to the main line. Switching train crews, fueling locomotives, and stockpiling construction materials would be greatly simplified and more economical. The "Cove" yard location is no "wetland" unless the water is physically turned out of the Meadow Valley Wash and diverted to that location. Otherwise the location dries up.]
- 9 • [The construction of this railroad anywhere and the inherent acquisition of rights-of-way will obviously displace some individuals, modify certain agricultural operations, and disrupt typical practices. These individuals and property owners must be fairly and adequately compensated for this. What will the process be that guarantees fair and adequate compensation? Perhaps an independent body, with authority, should be established for appeal and review in the event a property owner is aggrieved, and not fairly compensated.]

CONCLUSION

On behalf of the City of Caliente, which has hosted many of these hearings, we again thank the Department of Energy for bringing the opportunity to learn, understand and comment to us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin J. Phillips", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin J. Phillips

Mayor

City of Caliente

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